

decade, and last year had 24 million visitors. This, Governor Breathitt, is a tribute to the natural beauty and the wealth of the improvements that one finds here. And, yes, it is a tribute, too, to the aggressive efforts made by your administration, and the administrations of your predecessors, in attracting tourists to your area. It is not entirely a coincidence, then, my friends and colleagues, that Governor Breathitt, and I, working together to choose a main theme for this 1966 conference, selected natural resources, tourism and recreation.

If there is one characteristic that distinguishes our civilization from all the others, it is its mobility. Motion, of course, is a human attribute, but never before has the movement of mankind ranged over such vast areas and at such rapid rate. Another of our characteristics is the impulse to adventure—the inner compulsion, as we say in the vernacular, to “go places and do things.” These traits, coupled with a relatively new development—the freedom we of this era enjoy from the necessity of spending all of our waking hours wresting a livelihood from a harsh nature—have produced a new social phenomenon and a new industry—tourism.

Tourism has become a main industry of some of the nations of the world, is ranked by our Department of Commerce as third in this country—after manufacturing and agriculture—and is a principal economic resource of many of our states, some of those represented at this conference. For reasons already alluded to—with more leisure and greater opportunities to travel—there is every indication that tourism will become increasingly important in our economic and social scheme. Our region, so richly endowed by nature and favored by both history and geography, has enormous competitive advantages over other areas for the development of the tourist business. It is a land steeped in history, tradition and culture, with an equable climate and a terrain unexcelled in beauty and variety. If we utilize to the fullest these advantages, this new source of wealth will accelerate the economic progress that we see all about us today in our area of the country. In this connection, we have brought together here an imposing array of talent and experience to discuss the varied aspects of tourism, parks, recreation, natural resources and attendant subjects. This area of governmental endeavor is certain to increase in importance with every passing year, and I think we showed great wisdom when we established our newest committee, the Committee on Tourism Development, and gave the subject a featured spot in our program of this year.

At this my final conference with the Governors of the Southern States, I should like, just briefly, to present some thoughts I have on